

Love Wanaka

Annual Impact Report
2025-26

Love Wānaka

COMMUNITY
FUND

Ka ora te whenua,
ka ora te takata.

When the land is well,
the people are well.

When Papatūānuku
thrives, we thrive.

Protecting the environment at the heart of our home - now and into the future.

About

Love Wānaka exists to accelerate grassroots environmental action through visitor and industry engagement, enabling tourism to enrich our rohe (region) long into the future.

Our kaupapa has an intergenerational focus: how can we be good tūpuna (ancestors) and create the foundations for a thriving future long after we are gone?

Key objectives

Raise funds and awareness for grassroots environmental action.

Educate and inspire our visitors.

Create a culture of giving within our visitor industry.

Introduction



“For our community to reach its goals, we must be innovative, dedicated, and focused.

Love Wānaka is an excellent example of this – demonstrating the power of collaboration and the immense potential we have to benefit our communities indefinitely.

We are so proud to partner with Love Wānaka and look forward to working together into the future”

Jennifer Belmont
Chief Executive
45South Community Foundation

Over the past year, Love Wānaka has further strengthened its role as a platform for community-led environmental action, connecting visitors, businesses and locals with opportunities to make a positive contribution to our rohe.

Along the way, we’ve welcomed new partners, increased funding, and created more opportunities for visitors and businesses to connect with and give back to this special place of ours.

What inspires us most is the passion and commitment of the organisations, businesses and individuals leading this mahi. From restoring native habitats and improving freshwater health to protecting biodiversity and inspiring environmental stewardship, their work is creating lasting benefits for our environment and community.

While there's still much to do, it's so encouraging to see the momentum building. Every partnership, donation, volunteer hour and conversation strengthens a culture of care and commitment.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone who has been part of this journey over the past year - we truly couldn't do it without you.

Kā mihi nui,

Ash Bickley
Community Fund Coordinator

By the numbers FY23-26



\$114,175 in
Impact Grants

\$40,085 FY26



\$28,305 invested
for the future

\$9,395 FY26



1,325 visitor
+ industry donors

215 FY26



1,245 native
trees planted

800 FY26



980+ volunteer
opportunities shared

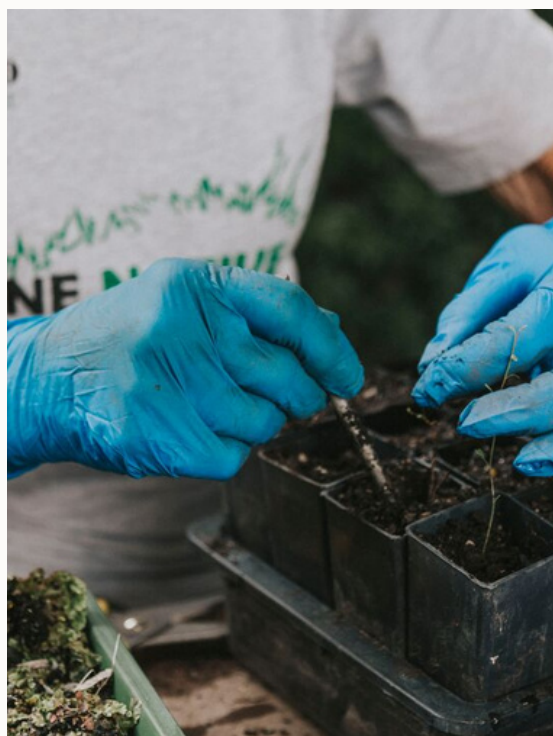
290 FY26



4.8m+
people reached

1.8m FY26

2026 Impact Grants



\$40,085
granted to the
community to
support local
environmental
efforts

Te Kākano Aotearoa - Mt Iron Regenerative Planting Programme

Te Kākano has spent more than 15 years inspiring community-led restoration across the Upper Clutha through propagation, education, and hands-on conservation.

Each year, they grow around 15,000 eco-sourced native plants in their community nursery, supplying restoration projects across the region and supporting hundreds of volunteers to take part in planting days and environmental initiatives.

This year, a \$7,215 Impact Grant will support the first stage of its new Mt Iron Restoration Project, a multi-year initiative focused on restoring one of Wānaka's most iconic landscapes.

Funding will help establish up to 1,000 eco-sourced native seedlings, support site preparation and maintenance, and create opportunities for locals, schools, businesses, and visitors to get involved.

Delivered in partnership with organisations including Queenstown Lakes District Council, Bike Wānaka, Upper Clutha Tracks Trust and the Upper Clutha Wilding Tree Group, the project will strengthen biodiversity while fostering a deeper connection between people and place.



"On behalf of Predator Free Wānaka and our 140 volunteers, we are delighted and grateful to be recipients of a Love Wānaka Impact Grant. This grant will help us extend our traplines from the 1,340 traps already installed and enable more monitoring to measure our impact. It is really important that we know we are both reducing predator numbers as well as achieving improvements in biodiversity" --

Ian Clarke, Predator Free Wānaka

Predator Free Wānaka - Creating Safe Habitat for Native Wildlife

Predator Free Wānaka is striving for a future where tūī, kārearea, grebes, geckos and other native species flourish across the Upper Clutha.

Supported by a passionate network of more than 140 volunteers, the organisation manages an extensive predator control network throughout the region.

A \$6,500 Impact Grant will help expand this work through the purchase and installation of additional traps, reducing pressure from introduced predators and improving breeding success for native wildlife.

By extending predator protection into new areas, the project will help create safer habitat corridors and strengthen biodiversity outcomes across the landscape.

The grant also supports the ongoing efforts of local volunteers who dedicate countless hours each year to protecting the natural environment.

2026 Impact Grants



\$40,085
granted to the
community to
support local
environmental
efforts

Upper Clutha Wilding Tree Group - Protecting Mt Iron from Invasive Weeds

Upper Clutha Wilding Tree Group is dedicated to protecting local landscapes from invasive wilding pines and other pest plant species.

Following the successful removal of wilding conifers from Mt Iron, the group's focus has shifted toward controlling invasive weeds that threaten regenerating native vegetation.

A \$5,000 Impact Grant will support an innovative drone-based weed control trial targeting species such as cotoneaster and barberry on steep, difficult-to-access slopes.

By tackling these invasive species early, the project will improve conditions for future restoration and test new approaches that could strengthen long-term weed management across the region.

"We are thrilled that we can progress the control of exotic weeds on Mt Iron using drone technology. By removing the exotic weeds, the existing native plants will be able to flourish. Combined with restoration planting, the biodiversity on Mt Iron will gradually be restored" --

Jenny Cleland, Secretary.



Friends of Bullock Creek - Wetland Restoration

Friends of Bullock Creek has spent more than a decade restoring the Bullock Creek wetland, one of Wānaka's most accessible and ecologically significant waterways.

Working alongside volunteers, Otago Fish & Game, Corrections NZ and local environmental partners, Friends of Bullock Creek has cleared invasive species, established thousands of native plants, improved habitat for native wildlife, and created opportunities for education and community involvement.

A \$5,800 Impact Grant will support a new partnership with Te Kāhano Aotearoa, providing a reliable supply of eco-sourced native plants for future restoration efforts.

By securing a consistent supply of locally sourced plants, the project will support the next stage of wetland restoration, enhancing biodiversity, improving habitat quality, and strengthening the resilience of this important freshwater ecosystem for future generations.

2026 Impact Grants



\$40,085
granted to the
community to
support local
environmental
efforts

Upper Clutha Tracks Trust - Restoring the Hāwea River Corridor

Through its community trail network, Upper Clutha Tracks Trust helps residents and visitors connect with some of the region's most valued natural landscapes.

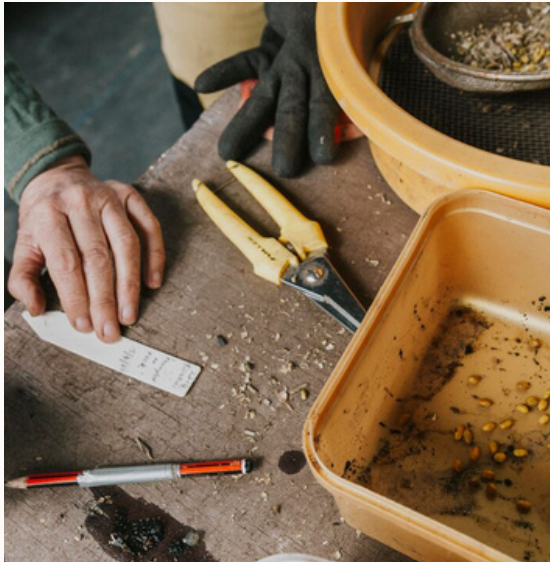
This year, the Trust received a \$5,000 Impact Grant, along with the \$2,500 Partner's Choice Grant, voted on by Love Wānaka's key partners and supporters.

Funding will support restoration along the newly established Hāwea River True Right Track, including native planting, invasive weed management, and improved access for ongoing conservation work.

Delivered alongside Te Kākano and Predator Free Wānaka, the project will restore habitat across priority sites while supporting expanded predator control along the river corridor.



2026 Additional Funding



Te Kākano Aotearoa - Growing Community-Led Restoration

Te Kākano Aotearoa will receive a further \$3,335 through strategic partnerships and community fundraising initiatives.

Contributions from Racers Edge, Skydive Wānaka and community planting day donations will support native planting and restoration projects across the Upper Clutha. This additional funding helps connect businesses, visitors and community members with meaningful opportunities to contribute to local conservation efforts.



Wai Wānaka - Championing Freshwater Health

Wai Wānaka mobilises residents, visitors, businesses, landowners and community groups to take action for healthy freshwater ecosystems across the rohe. Through education, restoration and community engagement, Wai works to improve water quality, restore bio-diversity, and strengthen stewardship.

A further \$4,735 has been directed to Wai through a partnership with Ripe Festival, supporting their ongoing work to protect the region's lakes, rivers and wetlands.



Love Wānaka Endowment Fund - Investing in Future Generations

From day one, Love Wānaka has focused on the long term: how can we be good tūpuna (ancestors) and create a thriving future long after we're gone.

In addition to the grants distributed this year, a further \$9,395 has been invested into the Love Wānaka Endowment Fund, bringing the value to more than \$25,000. We are building a permanent source of funding that will grow over time and support environmental action across the Upper Clutha for generations to come.



Engagement

Industry volunteer events

Love Wānaka's fourth industry planting day, delivered in partnership with Te Kāhano Aotearoa and QLDC, was the biggest yet, bringing together more than 60 volunteers to plant 800 native seedlings at Lismore Park - supporting biodiversity and creating opportunities for connection beyond the workplace.

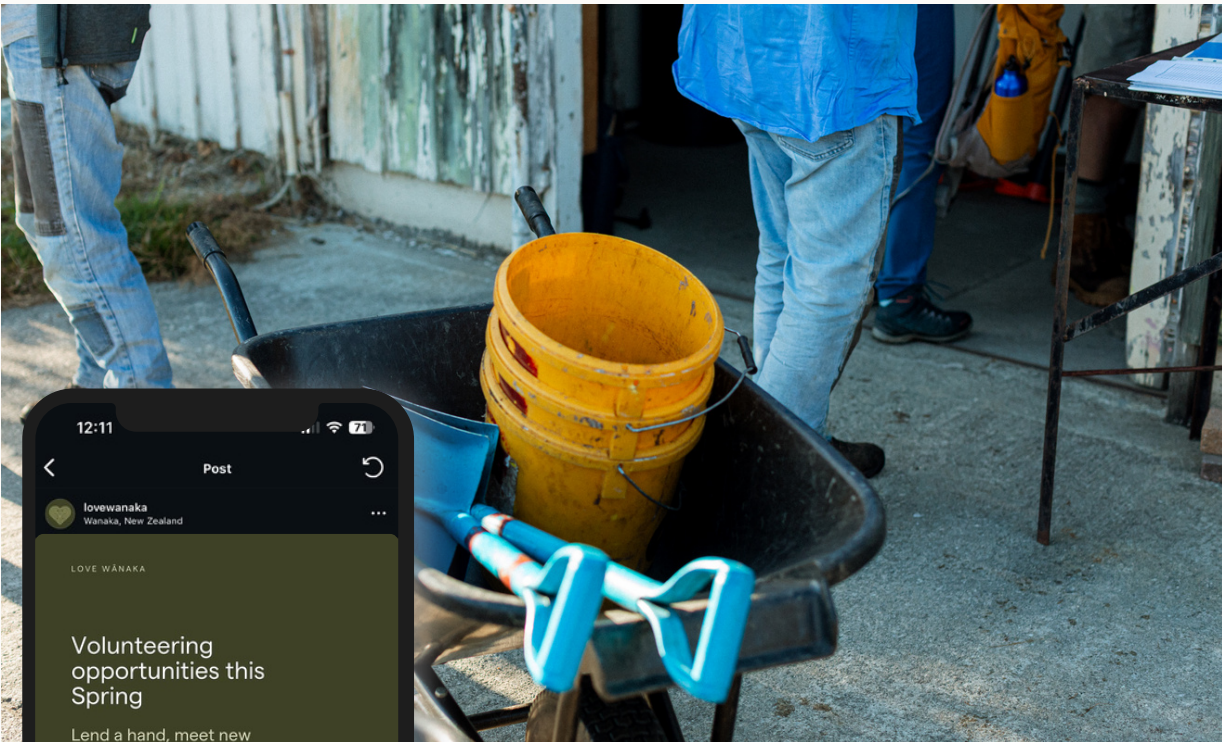


1 industry planting day

60 local volunteers

800 native plants

290 visitor volunteer opportunities shared



Visitor volunteer opportunities

Love Wānaka connects visitors with meaningful volunteer opportunities, encouraging deeper connections with place while supporting the community organisations caring for our environment.

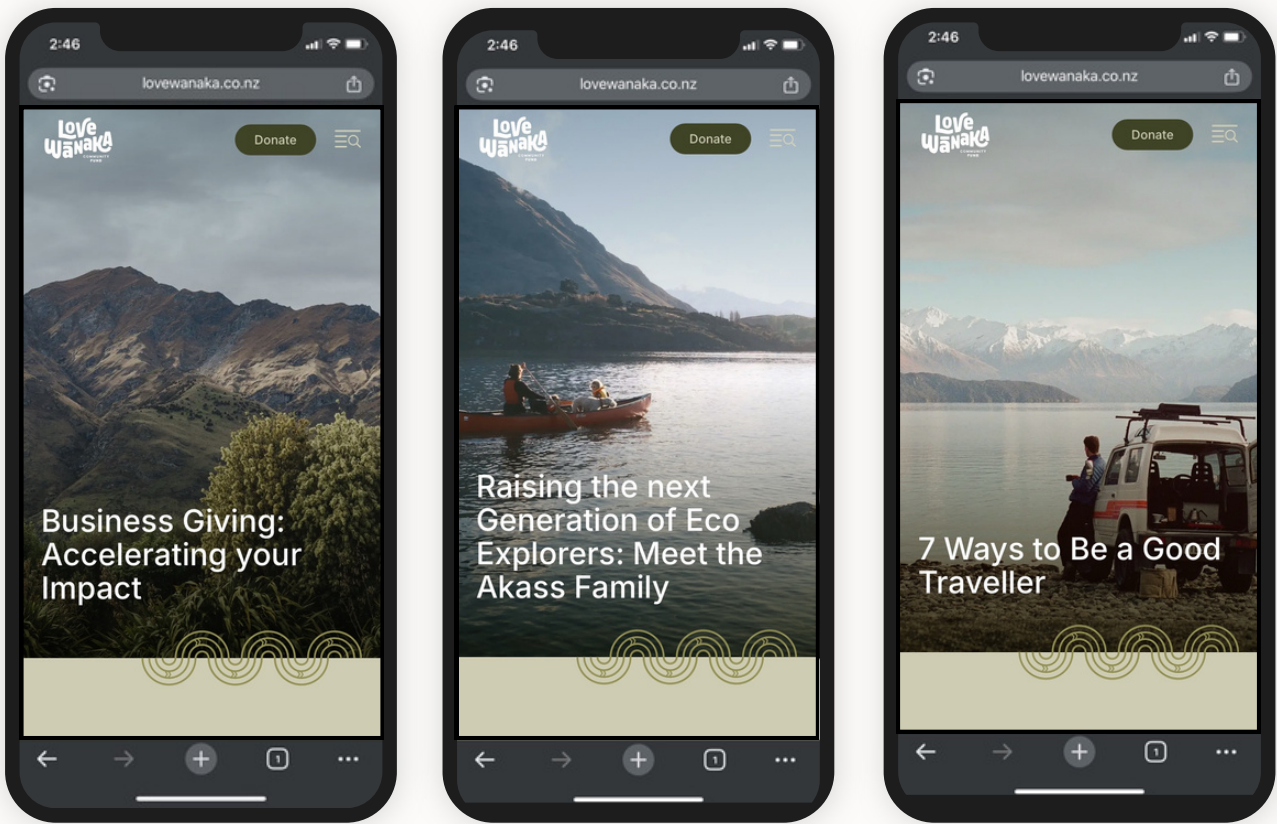
Reach

1.8m+ reached
6.8k+ subscribers

Education and inspiration

By sharing stories of place and showcasing local environmental initiatives, Love Wānaka encourages visitors to travel with greater care, connection and respect for our region.

Through digital storytelling, we connected more than 1.8 million viewers with the people, projects and values shaping Wānaka, inspiring meaningful ways to give back.



Supporters

Aroha nui -



Lake Wānaka Tourism

Love Wānaka was the first initiative to come to life from the region’s Destination Management Plan, Travel to a Thriving Future, developed collaboratively by Lake Wānaka Tourism, Destination Queenstown and QLDC. As our key delivery partner, Lake Wānaka Tourism connects us with businesses and visitors, and provides the operational support that powers our work.



45South Community Foundation

Love Wānaka and Love Queenstown are delivered in partnership with the 45South Community Foundation, a donor-driven charitable trust championing local philanthropy. The Foundation oversees risk, audit, and compliance, manages charitable fund allocations, and administers the Love Wānaka Endowment Fund.



Business Partners & Supporters

Active Massage | Alpine Physiotherapy | Bella Vista Wānaka | Brand + Butter | Catch a Fish | Copper Beech Lodge | Corner Store | Craigs Investment Partners | Destination Think | Discover Wānaka | Edgewater | Elaine Kelly Wellness | Fit Gym | Green Room Flower Co | Grounded Governance | Measured Land Surveys | Nanny Goat | New Zealand Photography Workshops | Queenstown Airport | Release NZ Rhythm & Alps | Ripe Wine & Food Festival | Skydive Wānaka | Smart Planner Software | Sterre Heijnen Photography | Stihl Shop Wānaka | The Cardrona | Valley View Wānaka | WanaHaka | Wānaka Brew Bar | Wānaka Flooring Xtra | Wānaka iSite Visitor Centre | Wānaka Mountain Guides | Wānaka Top 10 Holiday Park | Wānaka Wine Tours | Whare Kea Lodge | Wildwire

Impact Partners

This collective of businesses go above and beyond to support Love Wānaka. As Impact Partners, they donate 1% of their net proceeds or \$10,000 or more each year, creating lasting impact for our people and our place.



A black and white photograph of a mountain landscape. In the foreground, a rocky, grassy slope leads up towards a valley. Three birds, likely albatrosses, are captured in flight against the backdrop of a large, rugged mountain. The mountain's peaks are partially covered in snow and shrouded in mist or low clouds. The overall mood is serene and majestic.

Mō tātou, ā mō kā uri,
ā muri ake nei.

For us and the children
after us.

